PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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Keeping Families Strong **July, 2004**

PFLAG Member Reports on Legislator/ Public Debate Over Sex-Education Standards

(Reprinted from *Mountain Views*, the newsletter of the Evergreen Mountain Chapter of PFLAG. We appreciate the efforts of the PFLAG members and allies who take time to monitor legislative issues and speak out in support of the gay community.)

In the first half of this year, some Colorado lawmakers again attempted to denounce and disavow Gay and Lesbian Humanity through legislation. House Bill 04-1375, introduced by Rep. Shawn Mitchell (R-Broomfield), originally attempted to forbid school districts from providing education to students about so-called "alternative lifestyles", particularly homosexuality, except as it pertained to sexually transmitted diseases and fatalities.

Mitchell was motivated to create the bill after insinuations made by a small group of parents of Mormon persuasion in the Boulder Valley school district, charging [that information about] indecent and immoral practices was being forced upon schoolchildren.

Upon learning he probably would fail to garner enough votes from the Education Committee members with his bill as written, Mitchell essentially rewrote it and presented his amended version on the day of the committee hearing. About ten copies of this "strike down amendment" slowly circulated through the SRO crowd within the capitol building's old Supreme Court chambers. Now this bill was considered an "opt in" measure, requiring all parents and guardians to sign a form that would allow their children to attend health education classes at the public schools. Never mind the fact that school districts already have an "opt out" policy that allows the signing of a waiver from health education classes for any student.

Mitchell's new argument asserted that many parents aren't aware of this option and it's difficult for them to obtain accurate information from the school districts. A bill is necessary to establish this policy, declared Mitchell. So much for the Republican platform of "limited government is a better government".

The combination of testimonies pro and con lasted for hours, from the insightful to the ridiculous. Former Democratic State Senator Pat Pascoe provided a potent contention against the bill by pointing out the potentially nebulous aspect in defining alternative lifestyles. Would this include abstinence? Celibacy? Then, these may also not be discussed in schools. Unfortunately, Pascoe's comments were deemed out of order by committee chair Nancy Spence, since they pertained to the initial text of the bill.

One self-identified mother claimed the districts were teaching "a point of view" not consistent with majority opinion. Another lik-

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PFLAG to Join Gay Community in Pride Celebration

Sunday, July 18

Entertainment, Booths in Acacia Park 10 am—6 pm

March in the Parade with PFLAG! We need you.

The Pride Parade lines up at the intersection of Cache la Poudre Street and Tejon Street at 11:30 a.m. The Parade starts at 12:00. If you can help with the PFLAG booth, call Linda Knutson 260-0366

JULY
PFLAG MEETING

TUESDAY
JULY 20th
7:00 p.m.

Open Forum Discussion:
School District 11 Action
Guest: Jon Thomas,
Palmer Parent
and
Review of
July Pride Event

THE DWELLING PLACE
508 NORTH TEJON STREET

This newsletter is published by the Colorado Springs Chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

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The Colorado Springs Chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a non-profit, community-based organization not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, educational, counseling, business or political group. Our purpose is to support and educate families to better understand homosexuality and to provide the community with information and insights gained through our experience and study.

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To join the chapter and receive the newsletter regularly, complete and mail the membership form on page four. To receive complimentary copies of the newsletter, or if you have information to be included in the newsletter, comments or suggestions, please call Karen Flitton at 634-4433.

The next newsletter deadline is July 27, 2004.

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E-mail us at CSPFLAG@aol.com

Website: http://members.tde.com/pflagcos

PFLAG National Office website: http://www.pflag.org

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You can support Inside/Out Youth Services by purchasing King Soopers gift certificates at PFLAG meetings.

PFLAG Member Reports on Debate (Cont.)

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ened GLBT persons to computer viruses that need to ousted from the machine. "We should at least have as much concern towards our children's education as we do when there's a virus in our computers", she attested. I was particularly amused—the only time one could be in this situation—by the mother who scolded the district for having a gay man and lesbian speak to a fifth grade class about their personal lives. According to her, it "made some of the children visibly ill".

Well, my dear fellow citizen, I remember when I and numerous classmates became a bit squeamish at having to sit through those grade school hetero-based sex ed. films detailing the life "...from girl to woman, boy to man". You get over it and get educated.

The vote on the bill went down party lines: six Republicans voted "yes", five Democrats voted "no". After all that transpired, the strike down amendment morphed yet again to a basic guideline that school districts already follow: the content of the health education curriculum is to be made available to parents and guardians and they are to be provided an opportunity opt their children out of the class. This sure seemed like a reckless use of legislative time and taxpayer dollars. It's worth mentioning that members of the Education Committee acknowledged the great public response to the introduction of HB 1375 in the form of e-mails, letters, and phone calls. According to Spence, about 50% were for the bill and 50% were against it.

Thanks to all in our PFLAG chapter who part of the opposition outcry! Your efforts will benefit the enlightenment of future generations.

Paul Luzetski

District 11 Board Ousts "Non-Curricular" Student Clubs

As reported in last month's newsletter, the School Board in Colorado Springs School District 11 has been reviewing its policy regarding student clubs in conjunction with its opposition to the formation of a Gay Straight Alliance Club (GSA) at Palmer High School.

After a lawsuit was filed last fall by the ACLU on behalf of students whose effort to form a club was rejected by the school administration, the School Board denied recognition to all non-curricular clubs (chess club, book, club, ski club, Christian athletes) by withdrawing financial support, permission to advertise meetings within the school and recognition in the yearbook. Despite outspoken public opposition to the proposed policy at all three of its June meetings, the School Board voted at its June 23 meeting to confirm its refusal to recognize "non-curricular" clubs in all five School District 11 high schools.

Clearly, a Gay/Straight Alliance club at Palmer could help the school to combat student harassment of GLBT youth that presently occurs in the school. The School District does have an anti-harassment policy in place, but its effectiveness with respect to GLBT students is undermined by the school district's opposition to the GSA. Unfortunately, some Palmer students are now blaming those students who tried to start the GSA for the Board's decision to downgrade all "non-curricular" clubs.

Listen Here, Judge Pinky-Pants

Your newsletter editor is moving across town to a new house this month, leaving little time to sift through the usual sources for news. This humor piece is also reprinted from the excellent newsletter, *Mountain Views*, published by the Evergreen Mountain PFLAG Chapter. Thanks, Evergreen Mountain!

Adam Felber read a somewhat edited version of this piece on NPR's "This American Life" (Felber is also a frequent panelist on NPR's quiz show "Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me.....".

This Gay marriage thing is tearing my wife and me apart. Now, because of activist judges in Massachusetts and overzealous officials in San Francisco, our union is hanging on by the thinnest of threads.

Back in the simpler days of 2002, when we were planning our wedding, Jeanne and I used to coo fondly at each other about the joys that lay ahead. It wasn't that we were unsupportive of our Gay friends, no. We were just looking forward to the government's validation of our relationship's specialness—a license that affirmed that the two of us had made a unique and personal vow to each other. Something uniquer and specialer than any of our homosexual acquaintances could ever even hope for.

We're all for the separation of church and state, naturally, but if the government doesn't define marriage as the sacred union between a man and a woman, who will? Are Jeanne and I expected to treasure our union solely on the basis of our deep love, personal beliefs, public vows, and the government's blessing? Sorry, Judge Pinkypants, but that's just not good enough. Not for us. We need to know that we've got something that's only available to 90% of the population, the select and upstanding few.

Sure, some of us are criminals. Murderers, even. Some of us have committed rape, beaten children, tattooed swastikas on our bodies, abused animals, broken into houses, bilked the government our of millions of tax dollars, lied under oath, cheated on previous spouses, dishonored our fathers and mothers, failed to keep the Sabbath holy, mowed down pedestrians in our SUVs while intoxicated, coveted our neighbors' stuff, gotten ourselves put on death row, sold military secrets to the Chinese, urinated in public places, beaten up people who looked or sounded different than us, and sold drugs in schoolyards.

But we're Straight, and that means we can get married. And that's special. Or at least it was. Jeanne and I could look around at other married couples—at least the ones that aren't currently dealing with serial infidelity, divorce, spousal abuse, or bigamy—and think to ourselves, "Yes, that's what we're striving for. That kind of sanctity."

Are some Gay people serious about their commitment to each other? Sure, of course, but that's not the point. Let me give you an example. Jeanne and I know this couple, these two men. They've been together for years and years, longer than we have. They live on a farm in Pennsylvania and treasure their time together. They're loved by their community, have saved lives as members of the local fire department and have opened threir home to youth groups from the city. They've built a life together based on love and trust. BUT—and here's my point—they are GAY. They're both men. And if they're allowed to marry someday, where does that leave us, my wife and me? See what I'm saying? It'd cheapen everything we have.

And that's not a knock on Gay people. No. No. No. America loves its Gays. Look at the TV, with all those funny Gay people on "Will and Grace" and "Queer as

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Inside/Out Tournament Rocks Gleneagle

The Fourth Annual Inside/Out Golf Tournament hosted over 100 golfers on a bright breezy morning June 12th at Gleneagle Golf Club. This is the largest number of participants to date in an annual tournament that raises funds to support Inside/Out Youth Services. Organizers estimate that over $20,000 was raised this year. PFLAGgers Ed and Karen Flitton played in the tournament, and hope that more PFLAG members will join them at the June, 2005, tournament, already scheduled at the Gleneagle club.

The board of directors of Inside/Out met at a day-long retreat in May, chaired by Alicia McConnell, to review the state of Inside/Out and the organization's strategic plan for the future. Inside/Out is serving record numbers of youth in 2004, under the expert guidance of Executive Director Tasha Hill and her volunteer staff. The strategic plan includes a vibrant series of fundraising events and a search for a larger office/meeting space to better serve the increasing numbers of youth who come to Inside/Out.

Carole Feathers, a strong leader who fostered growth and stability in Inside/Out during her five-year term as president, has moved to an advisory role. Alicia McConnell is the new president. Congratulations to you both.

BULLETIN BOARD

July 18—	**PrideFest Celebration—Colorado Springs**
July 20—	**PFLAG Monthly Meeting 7:00 p.m., The Dwelling Place 508 North Tejon Street**
August 5-8	**29th NOMAS Conference (National Organization for Men Against Sexism) Hyatt Regency Hotel, San Francisco Airport. Go to ww.nomas.org or call (303) 666-7043**
August 17	**PFLAG Monthly Meeting—Summer Potluck Supper**
August 22	**AIDS Walk Colorado (Denver)**
Oct 22-24	**PFLAG National Conference, Salt Lake City**

Listen Here, Judge Pinkypants (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

Folk", and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy". They're funny! Funny, colorful people—they're nature's clowns, really, Like penguins.

And we don't allow penguins to marry, do we? No, these are dark times in my household. My wife and I look at each other with haunted, suspicious eyes, feeling like we've bought a whole bunch of shares in a stock that is about to be devalued. Suddenly, the eternal, personal vows that we swore to each other will mean very little. We'll basically become roommates who happen to wear matching rings, while meanwhile out our window we'll see Gays and penguins feeding each other wedding cake willy-nilly on our very own street corner.

That's why we need a Constitutional amendment that will protect marriage for Straight people. Until we have the right to enter that sacred union, violate it, exit it, and enter it again with somebody else, again and again, regardless of what crimes we commit, until we're too old and feeble to mouth the words "I do", - unless we have that right and Gay people don't, then there is nothing sacred in the United States of America.

- Submitted by Louis Sisneros

Hate Crimes Turned Into Art

An exhibition titled "Insight Out" has been featured from June 4 through July 5 at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

After finding 612 books with gay themes vandalized, and then prosecuting the perpetrator, the San Francisco Public Library made the books available to artists who have transformed hate and destruction into creativity and beauty.

Someone in Santa Fe obtained 44 of the mutilated books and found prominent northern New Mexico artists to transform them into art.

The exhibit has run concurrently with Santa Fe's Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

For more information, visit www.ccasantafe.org

Always Remember to keep all personal information from our PFLAG meetings

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Support Colorado Springs PFLAG—Become a Member

A membership in PFLAG extends a helping hand to families who have gay members, provides educational material for families and the public and offers a family voice that stands for equality and justice for all human beings. You can join at any time of the year. The current membership year extends from October 1, 2003 to September 30, 2004.

Name(s) of Member(s): _____ ____New member ____Renewing member

_____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ **Zip Code:** _____

Home Phone: _____ **Work Phone:** _____

e-mail: _____

Low Income	**$ 5**
Individual	**20**
Household	**30**
Supporting	**60 or more**

Amount Enclosed: $_____

Please make checks payable to Colorado Springs PFLAG and mail to P.O. Box 10076, Colorado Springs, CO 80932. Membership fee and contributions are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(C) 3 nonprofit organization.